

## Sociology - Hungary

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*Dénes Némedi and Péter Róbert*

## **Sociology – Hungary**

*Discussant: Endre Nagy*

### **1. Analysis of the pre-1989 situation**

Hungarian sociology has a more or less long history – depending on the criteria one uses. Using the widely accepted institutional criteria, its history is roughly 40 years. However, ideas regarded as sociological appeared as early as the 19th century.

In Hungary, as in most Central Eastern European nations, the 19th century was a period of rapid adaptation to modern Western ideas and institutions. At the beginning of the century, Hungary was an economically backward country with a traditional estate-like society. In the second half of the century, the economy and society were transformed into a predominantly capitalistic one. Parallel to this process, there was an astonishingly rapid reception of modern ideas. De Tocqueville was translated and commented upon in the 1840s, Comte and Buckle in the 1860s, and Spencer was known to philosophers in the 1880s and translated toward the end of the century.

At the turn of the century, a new generation of intellectuals created an association of social science and founded a journal dedicated to social issues, the *Husadik Század* (Twentieth Century). In a sense, 1900 is the birth date of Hungarian sociology. This group of sociologists was predominantly liberal or radical in politics, influenced by Spencer and the organicist sociology and by Marx and contemporary socialist thinkers. They believed that reactionary forces hindered the progress of Hungarian society, and they desired radical changes. The university remained closed to them. Their leading figure was Oszkár Jászi. He emigrated in 1919 to Austria, later going to the USA, where he taught at Oberlin College. Some intellectuals who later became internationally well known were loosely connected to these sociologists: György Lukács, Karl Mannheim, and Karl Polányi.

The end of the World War One was a disaster for Hungary: the country was reduced to one-third of its former territory, and after two revolutions failed, a conservative authoritarian regime was established. The best people of the first generation of sociologists died or were forced to emigrate. Not much interest in sociology remained at home. A new generation of intellectuals interested in social research emerged only in the 1930s. They did not care much for theory or institutionalized research. They did mostly qualitative, impressionistic surveys of the agrarian countryside. Only the works of Ferenc Erdei met scientific standards (e.g. Erdei, 1980). While they demanded radical agrarian reform, they were much influenced by right-wing ideas (even by anti-Semitism). The group disintegrated in the crises provoked by the beginning of World War Two.

After 1945, Sándor Szalai made a new, third attempt to create sociology in Hungary. Szalai was able to obtain a chair of sociology at Budapest University. But during the process leading to the establishment of a Stalinist regime, Szalai fell from grace, in spite of his Marxist orientation; his chair was abolished in 1948 and he was imprisoned.

Sociology appeared again in the 1960s. Several factors contributed to the creation of an institutionalized sociology: as the level of post-1956 repression subsided, the Kádár regime wished to obtain the support of intellectuals; the reformist wing of the ruling party believed that modern science would contribute to the renovation of socialism; and the regime's international reputation required the existence of modern scientific institutions. Anyway, a dozen men and women seized the opportunity and, in 1963, a Group (later Institute) of Sociology was created at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS) and concentrated considerable intellectual capital. The specialized journal *Szociológia* (Sociology) (later *Szociológiai Szemle* – Sociological Review) was founded in

1972, and the first university program leading to the equivalent of an MA degree was started in the same year. The progress of sociology gained momentum and even political setbacks (the Party's ideological condemnation of some sociologists, the forced emigration of such sociologists as Ágnes Heller, Ferenc Fehér, György Márkus in the early 1970s and Iván Szelényi, István Kemény in the late 1970s, and the prohibition of research on poverty and the Roma problem) could not halt it. At the end of state socialism, Hungarian sociology had already produced results that were internationally known and esteemed, and about one hundred sociologists worked in the country, most of them having an acceptable level of theoretical and methodological knowledge.

The peculiar circumstances leading to the creation of contemporary Hungarian sociology left their mark on the physiognomy of the discipline. Hungarian science under state socialism, including sociology, had a dual structure, differentiating between research institutes and higher education (the Soviet and French model of science). In sociology, the research branch was stronger in intellectual capital until the end of the 1980s. The reason for this was simple: while the regime accepted the existence and practice of sociology as a science, it was quite realistically afraid of sociology's possible ideological impact at the universities. So only a limited number of students were allowed to study sociology. As a result, many sociologists came from neighboring disciplines, mainly economics and history. The fear of ideological reprisals reduced the interest in theory – though the probability of reprisals diminished in the 1980s. On the other hand, the reformist origins of contemporary Hungarian sociology excluded the necessity and possibility for the discipline to purify itself after the fall of state socialism.

## 2. Redefinition of the discipline since 1990

Hungarian sociology evolved in the 1990s. It was already quite well developed and up-to-date by the end of the 1980s. There were no significant changes in paradigms. Official Marxism disappeared, but its influence in the discipline was already insignificant by that time. The change in the political climate facilitated the adoption of Western paradigms and research patterns, but did not require the wholesale redefinition of the sociological endeavor. Of course, sociologists who were closer to the Communist Party elite lost some of their influence and prestige within the discipline, and those who were not favored in the earlier period came more to the fore. The leading sociologists were in tacit agreement that there should not be any politically motivated purge in the discipline. One crucial factor in this development was that those émigré sociologists who came back or renewed contact with their home country accepted this agreement.

Few changes can be seen in institutions. One of the most important continuities that survived the collapse of the former regime is institutional duality. It is based on two pillars: the research (in Hungarian terminology: academic) sector and the educational system. As in the earlier period, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS, *Magyar Tudományos Akadémia*), directs the “academic” sphere, “governing” a network of research institutions in the various fields of science, including sociology. On the other hand, the university sector expanded rapidly. Now there are departments of sociology at many universities, and they are responsible for the educational sphere. The largest departments can be found in Budapest, e.g. the Institute of Sociology of the Eötvös Loránd University (*Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem*, ELTE) consists of seven departments dealing with theoretical and empirical sociology, methodology and statistics, social psychology, ethnicity, and social policy. There are other departments of sociology in Budapest at the University of Economics (*Budapesti Közgazdasági és Államigazgatási Egyetem*, BKÁE) and the Technical University (*Budapesti Műszaki Egyetem*, BME). Several departments can be found in provincial towns at the universities of Debrecen (*Debreceni Egyetem*, DE), Szeged (*Szegedi Egyetem*, SZE), Pécs (*Pécsi Egyetem*, PE), Miskolc (*Miskolci Egyetem*, ME), Gödöllő (*Szent István Egyetem*, SZIE), etc. A new Catholic university established in Budapest in the mid-1990s (*Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem*, PPKE) also trains sociologists. Another new development is that social policy is gaining institutional independence from sociology.

In addition to public academic and educational institutions, there was an emergence of private research organizations, mostly public opinion research institutes. Most of their activity focuses on market research, although some of them (TÁRKI, Szonda-Ipsos, Medián, Gallup) carry out academic research as well. Private institutions do the fieldwork for several empirical academic research projects, and, after completing the university, trained sociologists can find employment in the private sphere easier than in the public sphere.

The basic professional body is the Hungarian Sociological Association (*Magyar Szociológiai Társaság*), with several research committees representing different fields of sociology and about 700 members (about 200 doing research in some form). A recently established institution in social sciences is the Rudolf Andorka Social Science Society, which aims to support sociological and demographic research by providing fellowships to younger or senior scholars.

Studying sociology is a crucial part of the institutional system. As part of the huge educational expansion on the tertiary level in Hungary in the 1990s, sociology increased as well – and more than the average. In 2000, the number of sociology students was 1,856, about 0.6% of all students, studying at seven institutions. While in 1990 sociology was taught only in Budapest, in 2000, 54% of all students studied at four provincial universities. Tuition for tertiary education was introduced in the mid-1990s, but was abolished later. Now earning one's first diploma is free.

There is no sole standard curriculum of sociology at the universities. At all institutions, students have to take 10 semesters and write a thesis to obtain a diploma. This is practically an MA program; no BA program in sociology exists in Hungary. Courses on sociology probably have the most comprehensive character at the ELTE University; staff and faculty are the largest here in the Institute of Sociology; almost all fields in theory and empirical studies are well represented by professors and lecturers. The curriculum at the second biggest sociology department, at the Budapest University of Economics, has some focus on the sociology of economics. At the universities in the provincial towns, the teaching of research methods is less developed.

The graduate (PhD) training of sociologists takes place in the two separate doctorate schools, one program at the ELTE University, another at the Budapest University of Economics. Having a PhD is the basic requirement for an academic research position or for a lecturer position at the university. The program started in 1992. The curriculum consists of a period of course-taking and a period of writing one's thesis. Since the language of the PhD program (and of all undergraduate programs) is Hungarian, doctoral students are almost exclusively Hungarians (including some students coming from neighboring countries). The number of PhD students rose from 67 in 1995 to 134 in 2000, but only 12 theses have been defended so far. The number of grants available for PhD students is limited, and PhD students have to pay a rather high tuition.

The scientific qualifying system has a similar twofold character based on the academic/educational duality mentioned above. After completion of the PhD, there is an academic (in the Hungarian sense) and an educational route to completing a doctorate – i.e., the system of scientific promotion is adapted to the dual institutional system of higher learning in Hungary. Taking the academic route, one can become a Doctor of Science in Sociology by going through the evaluation of the Sociological Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Taking the educational route, one has to complete a habilitation (like in Germany), and this leads to the full professor position at the university. The doctorate committees at the universities supervise this process. These committees are multi-disciplinary, with members from various sciences, including sociology.

### 3. Core theoretical and methodological orientations

One of the consequences of the discontinuity in the development of Hungarian sociology is that there was no theoretical tradition that survived the recurring crises. The positivistic-evolutionary approach was discarded after 1919, and the new beginnings after 1945 negated the legacy of

earlier generations. After 1963, sociology legitimated itself by assimilating prestigious international theoretical and methodological achievements.

Max Weber was translated as early as 1967 and his works have continued to appear until the present. In the early years of Hungarian sociology, Weber was in a sense the model sociologist, the preferred subject of theoretical publications. We have the impression that interest in Weber has meanwhile declined. The reason is, perhaps, that Weber was most interesting as a critic of bureaucracy (and consequently of state socialism) and as a source of a non-Marxist theory of capitalism. The first reason has lost its significance, and so has the second, since only a minority position in Hungarian social thought identifies the new system as capitalism.

Émile Durkheim's fate was different. He never served as camouflage for political and social criticism. Rather, he was the ideal hero of serious scientific work. No wonder the first of his works to be translated was his study of suicide (in 1967), at that time at its peak of popularity. Several other volumes followed, and one of the authors of this paper published a historical-epistemological analysis of his sociological theory of knowledge (Némedi, 1996). However, despite the strong presence of Durkheim in the teaching of sociology, today there is nothing especially Durkheimian in Hungarian sociology.

The fates of Jürgen Habermas and Pierre Bourdieu (who are among the most important sociologists of our time) were mirror images of each other. Habermas' influence in Hungary was due to his analysis of the "public sphere" (his book was translated in 1971). He provided the tools to construct an ideal model of public communication that could be critically contrasted against the then-existing restricted, socialist public sphere. His influence was very visible in theories of mass communication (e.g. Angelusz, 1983). The Habermasian theory of communicative action, too, received some serious interpretative-theoretical attention (Némedi, 2000a; Felkai, 1993), and new volumes of translations appeared. However, the impact of Habermasian theory in empirical research declined. One of the reasons is certainly that, in its country of origin, too, the Habermasian school was rapidly disintegrating or retreating from sociology. On the other hand, the late Habermasian theory of the welfare state and his colonization thesis, while very relevant to transition societies, was contrary to the dominant liberal mood in the discipline.

Bourdieu's fate was different. He, too, was an important figure in the 1970s. His approach and theory inspired empirical research on education and stratification (he greatly influenced Zsuzsa Ferge). Even now, he is cited rather often; his notion of capital and capital conversion is the everyday conceptual tool of sociologists who deal with transition social processes. However, his theoretical work was never submitted to serious analysis, and the systematic assimilation of his work stopped in 1978.

The success story in the field of theory was that of rational choice theory. László Bertalan and László Csontos (Csontos, 1999) already effectively propagated it toward the end of the 1970s. In the 1990s, many translations appeared and the first empirical research reports influenced by the rational choice model were published. The relative importance of rational choice theory can be seen in the fact that 23 articles of the 66 coded as "theory" in the *Szociológiai Szemle* dealt with it, mostly sympathetically. Róbert Tardos (1998), for example, dealt with theoretical problems of the micro-macro link, analyzing the most important proposals to solve the issue. The paper was well received in the sociological community. It is easy to understand the relative success of the rational choice paradigm: it is an approach that is very popular in the Anglo-Saxon world; it has many points in common with the neo-liberal economic approach, which had overwhelming influence in the development of transition economic policies; and since a high percentage of active sociologists came from economics, its language is familiar to them.

Postmodernism was also discussed in Hungary. The works of Jameson and Lash were translated and, in the second half of the decade, there was growing interest in Foucault, ten volumes of whom were published in translation in a relatively short period. However, postmodernism was and is more an intellectual fashion than an establishing scientific paradigm. In

sociology proper, its influence has been limited. Hungarian sociologists remained modern in the sense that they preferred working in ways conforming to mainstream scientific patterns.

### **New East-West asymmetries**

System transformation put the relationship between Eastern and Western sociology in a new light. Post-socialist transition became an interesting topic for Western sociologists who could invest more funds in this investigation. Eastern European sociologists could contribute with their local knowledge, rooted in the sense of sociology's public relevance and a flexible language capable of mediating between conceptual frameworks and lived experience (Wessely, 1996). There were hopes that the possibility of merging the legacy of Eastern cultural and historical uniqueness and postmodern thought would enhance the potential to enlarge and deepen knowledge about postmodernity in general. However, these hopes placed in the cognitive chances of Eastern European sociology could not be realized; and the failure and malaise of Eastern European sociology can be attributed to a certain colonization by Western/Anglo-American colleagues. Eastern European social scientists often found themselves reduced to the auxiliary role of data suppliers, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the most talented (or the most fortunate?) young scientists received Western-style training that alienated them from Eastern realities. Both developments reduced the "cognitive chances" of Eastern sociology (Csepeli, Örkény et al., 1996).

### **Qualitative vs. quantitative approaches**

The cleavage between qualitative and quantitative approaches exists in Hungary, too. Survey-type fieldwork is conducted more frequently. Quantitative researchers argue that sociological information and knowledge based on large nationwide probability samples are more valid and reliable than case studies or interviews. Qualitative researchers in turn question the validity and reliability of surveys that remain on the surface of social problems. Practically, there are very few researchers in Hungary who apply both approaches; some scholars believe in quantitative, others in qualitative methodology. In spite of the preference given to the quantitative approach, more sophisticated methods, like multivariate statistical analysis, are applied mostly by the younger generation. But the methodological textbook by Rudas (1998) published in English is worth mention.

## **4. Thematic orientation and funding**

There is large variety of research themes but, due to lack of space, we will focus on certain topics only. We base our estimate of the relative importance of research themes on two sources: GESIS/IZ's mail survey on sociological projects and our own research approaching the problem from the viewpoint of outputs, i.e., a content analysis of publications appearing in the main sociological journal, *Szociológiai Szemle*.

Already in the socialist period, *social structure*, *social mobility*, and *way of life* were the most important fields of study; and in this respect there was no change after 1990 (23% of the articles in *Szociológiai Szemle* dealt with social structure in a broad sense). However, the approach to these topics has changed. Ferge, the author of a frequently-quoted English-language book on the social system in Hungary in the 1970s (Ferge, 1979), turned to the problems of social policy research. Andorka, the author of the monograph on social mobility in Hungary (Andorka, 1982), started to analyze poverty and social exclusion. In sum, there was a shift in interest toward research on the social consequences of system transition, toward the basic problems of winners and losers.

The empirical research focused on testing hypotheses like the "interrupted bourgeoisification" by Iván Szelényi and Robert Manchin (1989) and the "grand coalition" between the new economic elite and the former political elite by Elemér Hankiss (1990). In this line, Tamás Kolosi carried out a series of research projects in the 1990s and summarized his results in a monograph proving that

various types of embeddedness – like managerial position or participation in the “second economy” before 1990 – were useful for later economic success and led to the development of a new “capitalist class”. Szelényi (1995) expressed another opinion about Hungary’s economic elite and labeled the system a “post-communist managerialism”, in which managers took part in the privatization of the firms but did not become the owners of the new privatized companies. (On this, see also Eyal, Szelényi, and Townsley, 1998.) For the economic elite, Lengyel (1994) emphasized that, already under socialism, directors with educational and professional competence replaced the politically reliable directors of working-class origin. This is the reason why more reproduction and less circulation were expected for Hungary than for other post-socialist countries (Szelényi and Szelényi, 1995). Empirical research supported this assumption less for the political and more for the economic elite (Szelényi; Szelényi and Kovách, 1995). Kolosi (2000) found a similar trend of reproduction for the economic elite, too. The most important feature of the elite change was a faster generation replacement, an inflow of younger people into elite positions. This held for political leaders or managers more than for the cultural and scientific elite (in English, see also Kolosi and Sági, 1999).

In addition to the formation of the new elite, the emergence of self-employment (the petite bourgeoisie) was a significant research topic connected to privatization. Kolosi and Róna-Tas (1992) investigated entry into self-employment and found that cultural capital and human capital investments, but not former Communist Party membership, were the best predictors for starting private businesses in post-socialist Hungary (see also Róna-Tas, 1994). At the same time, the group pushed to self-employment by privatization turned out to be very heterogeneous, and the majority of them had no financial capital for any serious business (Laky, 1992). Consequently, by terminology, these people can hardly be labeled entrepreneurs. The Hungarian small business is of “too micro level” in international comparison. A most recent research on the topic revealed that a person’s father’s self-employment had an increasing impact on his becoming self-employed himself and that, rather than simple CP membership, the length of time spent in the party (interpreted as human capital investment) also influenced entry into private business (Róbert and Bukodi, 2000).

Andorka (1996) drew the first balance of the losers of the system transformation. He based his article on the increase of social inequalities on the Hungarian Household Panel Survey carried out in collaboration between the Department of Sociology, the Budapest University of Economics, and TÁRKI. This article underlined that more people lived in poverty after 1990 and especially that income differentiation has grown. Specific demographic and social groups appeared to be at risk of poverty: old people, but not all of the pensioners; families with several children (and especially the children in these families: child poverty); those with a low level of education; the unemployed; and those belonging to the Roma ethnic group (in English, see also Andorka and Spéder, 1996).

Ferge, in the framework of an international project (SOCO, 1994), carried out research on the evaluation of system transformation; her analysis (Ferge, 1996) shows that disappointment with the system transformation was a basic phenomenon in Hungary and stronger than in other post-socialist societies. Ferge offered a plausible explanation for this, namely that Hungary was more democratic and less depressed before 1990 than other countries, and consequently Hungarians have won less freedom. On the other hand, like people in other former socialist countries, they have lost lots of safety, so the relative balance was more negative for Hungarians. Róbert (1999) discussed other explanatory mechanisms, like materialistic vs. post-materialistic orientation, reference group theory, and the balance of investments and returns.

Obviously, from the point of view of transition, problems of social structure could not be separated from the *sociological study of economics* (industrial sociology, the sociology of work – which latter is present in 23% of the articles). In addition to economic topics already referred to, research on labor market issues should be mentioned. In this field, there was a strong focus on the decrease in the working population and the consequences of this decline, with special emphasis on unemployment. At the beginning of the 1990s, unemployment in Hungary was high by

international comparison. On the macro level, the risk of becoming unemployed was highly correlated to privatization. On the micro level, a low level of education, older age, and/or Roma ethnicity increased the risk of unemployment. Regional differences were also substantial. The unemployed had few chances to find new employment (Köllő, 1992).

In addition to the analysis of social structure, its connection to political fields became another relevant new topic as Hungary turned into a multiparty system. (Issues of *political sociology* were present in 10% of the articles.) An important paper explicitly analyzed the social bases of party politics (Kolosi; Szelényi et. al., 1991). The authors identified three class positions: the intellectual elite (cadre elite and intellectuals); private entrepreneurs (the political bourgeoisie, entrepreneurs, and the new petite bourgeoisie); and the working class. They supposed the existence of three “political fields” occupying the space “between” the class positions, i.e., positions in the political space representing class coalitions. The liberal field is between the elite and the entrepreneurial class, the national-Christian field is between the entrepreneurial class and the working class, and the social-democratic field is between the elite and the working class (see also Szelényi and Szelényi, 1991). While this theoretical model has some plausibility, the empirical research conducted after the 1990 elections found only a very weak association between class position and voting behavior, while abstention was significantly related to class. Power, conflicting social groups, and strata were in the center of Szalai’s publications (1994; 1996; 1999). She consequently tried to interpret every turn of politics in terms of elite group interests. According to her, an emerging new technocratic elite was the main protagonist of the transition period in Hungary; and her concept modifies Hankiss’ “grand coalition” hypothesis.

After 1990, there was a double development in *public opinion research*: the majority of people in opinion research moved into the new commercial opinion research companies, producing information for the market and for political actors. A minority remained in social science proper. An outstanding example of scientific research in this field is the work of Angelusz (2000). He is concerned primarily with the visibility of social processes (“social optics”) and analyzes structures of the public sphere from this point of view. The problem he starts out from is that accurate perception of the social environment is nearly impossible. According to Angelusz, the structure of communication is one of the factors that explain differences in visibility. Visibility, which is a precondition for a functioning democracy, depends on the transmissibility of channels connecting the informal and the public spheres of communication, “good” visibility resulting from a high level of thematic synchronicity.

*Education* was not a dominant theme in *Szociológiai Szemle* (3%), presumably because there are special journals and bulletins in this field. But studies on educational inequalities have strong traditions in Hungary and continued to be an important research topic in the 1990s as well. The analysis by Róbert (1991) demonstrated that the effect of social background hardly declined during the decades of socialism. The article by Szelényi and Aschaffenburg (1993) put greater emphasis on the role of institutions in creating and maintaining inequalities. They interpreted the persistence of educational inequalities as evidence of the “new class” theory. Turning to financial inequalities, in a recent article, Gzásó (1997) argued that only the offspring of high-status families with good material background had the chance to receive real marketable degrees in the post-socialist era. On the effect of cultural and material capital on educational decisions, see also Bukodi (1999) in English.

Only 4% of the articles in *Szociológiai Szemle* dealt with *rural and agrarian sociology*. However, these themes have greater salience in social science and in public debates than this indicator suggests. The reason is partly that the over-centralization of the country generates tensions that have to be investigated. Controversial agricultural policies also contributed to the interest in social science research on rural problems. The paper of Harcsa, Kovách, and Szelényi (1994) investigated this problem in a historical context. They argue that the agricultural crisis in the 1990s is a consequence of the economic recession as well as of the failure to institute reforms earlier in the 1980s. They also criticize the path taken by privatization and compensation as well as



the general economic policy that does not adequately maintain and support agriculture. Privatization has led to significant differences in the distribution of wealth, and in the 1990s rural societies have become greatly segmented. A new agrarian proletariat with severely limited life chances has even emerged. (For an international comparison, see also Csizér and Kovách, 1995 and Granberg and Kovách, 1998).

Two aspects of *nationality or ethnicity* are highly relevant in the Hungarian context: the problems of the Roma minority and those of the Hungarian minorities in the neighboring countries (5% of the articles dealt with these issues). Kemény and his collaborators (Gábor Kertesi, Gábor Havas) conducted empirical research on Roma issues. (For an overview, see Kemény 1999) The problem has many ramifications, extending to issues of unemployment, housing, education, and social policy. While the Roma problem is inseparably linked to issues of inequality and poverty, the minority question is more a cultural-political one. The most comprehensive research (Csepeli et al., 2000) centers on structures of national identification.

### **Private vs. public funding**

The dual system (academic institutions and universities) is rather expensive. The main feature of the system is the institutions' large budgetary deficit. The financial situation of teaching activities is worse than that of research. While researchers can apply to various funds and institutions for funding, similar opportunities hardly exist for improving the material circumstances of lecturing. Teaching sociology is not a highly expensive field of education, but small computer labs, few computers relative to the large number of students, and old versions of software lower the quality of education at the universities.

The National Foundation for Scientific Research (*Országos Tudományos Kutatási Alap*, OTKA) is the main institution supporting research work. Applications can be submitted every year; they should include a research proposal and a detailed research budget. Applications are sent to anonymous reviewers; then, a board, which is elected for a 3-year period, makes the final decision. In principle, the system is competitive. However, the smallness of the field seriously limits anonymity and competition. The board always seeks a balance among the different fields of sociology and in institutional and geographical distribution. In general, the financial conditions of sociological research are worse than before 1990. The increase in the amount OTKA could distribute for research did not keep up with inflation; the real value of the research funds fell in the 1990s.

In addition to OTKA, researchers can apply for funds to the Ministry of Education. The amount available from this source is capped and more limited. The government and ministries also commission sociological studies and public opinion research on various topics. By law, tenders must be announced in this case; the tenders can be fully open, or specific research institutes can be invited to apply. Since this research is more the applied kind, this form of financing research provides more opportunity to private research institutes than to academic institutes. With the exception of the Soros foundations, actors in the private sphere provide little support for sociological research. There are some intergovernmental (like the French-Hungarian Balaton program) and European programs that occasionally support sociological research, as well.

While OTKA provided only part of the funding for sociological research, the only quantitative data we have covering the whole period relates to this organization. The data are taken from the official OTKA newsletters, which give some idea of the trends and magnitude of research funding in Hungary. By agreement, the social sciences get 20% of the total OTKA budget, and sociology gets roughly 4-5%. Funding of sociology was at a relatively high level in 1992, equaling roughly US \$393,000 at that time; after a two-year period of decline, it reached a new peak in 1995 (191% of the 1992 amount), falling to its lowest level in 1996 (36% of the 1992 amount in real value). In 2000, it was at 65% of the 1992 value. The distribution between Budapest and the provinces reflected the general geographical pattern of Hungarian science: 89% of the funds went to Budapest (while 61% of all students study and 38% of all sociology professors teach in the

provinces!). The funds were fairly evenly distributed between the two main types of locations of sociological research, with universities receiving 45% of the funds and research institutes 49%. Not surprisingly, social structure studies and economic sociology (in a broad sense) received the highest amounts among the main branches of sociological research (15% and 19% respectively), none of the other branches receiving more than 10%.

## 5. Public space and academic debates

### Debated themes, problems, methods

Debates have little tradition in Hungarian sociology. The field was too small, sociologists knew each other, and criticism was underdeveloped. Special factors contributed to the avoidance of public controversy. The field of sociology was not homogeneous under state socialism. There were differences in worldview, ideology, and theoretical and methodological issues, but controversies were not fought out in the open. Public criticism could be exploited by the Party and the state to legitimate repressive measures, so fear of denunciation restrained controversies. Habits are changing slowly, but we can speak about some debates.

One of them is about lasting poverty. One party in this debate, Ferge and other social policy researchers, state that poverty is lifelong for those families who are in deprived situations and that there is no way out of this state. Researchers at the Hungarian Household Panel survey, like Andorka, Kolosi, Tóth, and Spéder, however, provided empirical evidence that families who were at the bottom of society one year could climb up from this position to be in a better economic position in the next year.

The other debate was about the role of the state in social policy and welfare. Again Ferge referred to the results of public opinion research, which proved that the majority of Hungarians counted on the state and expected it to take an active role in reducing social inequalities and in providing free (or strongly subsidized) education and health care for them. Another piece of research, however, investigated what people knew about the use of taxes, the real choices the government had to make when deciding about the use of funds, the real prices of educational or health care “goods”, etc. The results revealed that people knew very little about these questions; in fact, they did not know what budget decisions they expected from the state. The research tried to explore the public view about different options on how people could take more care of themselves instead of always waiting for governmental solutions (Csontos, Kornai, and Tóth, 1996).

A much less explicit debate referred to emerging class relations and to the use of the concept of class. When analyzing social structure under socialism, sociologists wrote about “stratification” because the term “class” had a bad connotation in Hungarian sociological literature. Approaching the problem from the viewpoint of class identification, Róbert Angelusz and Róbert Tardos (1995) concluded that the use of the term “class” makes the empirical results questionable and misleading even in the post-socialist era. People have negative attitudes toward the “working class”, while the term “middle class” has a new, “wishful-thinking character”. Indeed, research by Fábrián, Kolosi, and Róbert (1998) on the social structure revealed that the groups between the top and the bottom of society were quite stratified and inconsistent.

Róbert (1998a) suggested introducing the neo-Weberian class system developed by John Goldthorpe, which is widely used for analyzing social structure in industrial societies. Various classifications and an empirical test of their validity were investigated and compared as a further step toward a more careful class analysis of Hungarian society (Bukodi and Róbert, 1999).

### Principal academic journals, publication

Due to bad financial circumstances and to the relative narrowness of the field, publication possibilities are limited in Hungarian sociology. The leading journal is *Szociológiai Szemle*

(Sociological Review); the Hungarian Sociological Association publishes it in Hungarian four times a year. A selection of the best articles is published every year in an English-language edition.

Another journal is named *Századvég* (End of Century); it is published in association with the Rudolf Andorka Social Science Society. It also appears four times a year in Hungarian. *Replika* (Riposte) is an interdisciplinary social science journal aiming at a broader public, with a postmodern tinge. There are some other journals, like *Társadalomkutatás* (Social Research) and *Esély* (Chance). Sociologists regularly publish in the journals of other social sciences, for example in *Statisztikai Szemle* (Statistical Review), *Közgazdasági Szemle* (Economic Review), and *Demográfia* (Demography). Both *Statistical Review* and *Economic Review* appear every month; *Demography* is published quarterly.

In addition to journals, some publishers specialize in works in the social sciences. The Ministry of Education finances book publishing on a grant basis. Publishers have to submit a synopsis of the book and apply for financial support. Books that can also be used as course material in education have better chances to get financed.

Sociological books published in Hungarian are mostly translations, but in recent years original works by Hungarian authors appeared in greater number, too. The most important publishers are *Osiris*; *Új Mandátum* (New Mandate), which collaborates with ELTE; *AULA*, which is associated with the Budapest University of Economics; and *Századvég* (End of Century), which publishes books as well.

### **New manuals, databases**

As mentioned above, translations and course materials are easier to publish in Hungary. Several examples of the combination of these two can be mentioned; we provide only a selection. Two volumes include classical and modern texts on social stratification (Angelusz, 1997) and on social mobility (Róbert, 1998b). Andorka et al. (1995) also edited a collection of papers and book chapters on social stratification. A two-volume reader containing classical texts of sociological theory came out in 2000 (Felkai et al.). Lengyel and Szántó (1994; 1997; 1998) edited three volumes of translations of articles and book chapters on economic sociology. Another book edited by Wessely (1998) contains translations from the field of sociology of culture.

Rudolf Andorka (1997) has written an important real manual titled *Introduction to Sociology*. This is widely used to train first-year sociology students.

An important database is the nonprofit Data Archive at TÁRKI RT. It is a member of the International Federation of Data Organization (IFDO) and of the Council of European Social Sciences Data Archives (CESSDA). Data files from about 450 sociological and social statistical surveys are stored in SPSS system file form. This is the official data archive of OTKA; the publicly-funded surveys are available here for secondary analysis and there is on-line access to data of the New Democracies Barometer. The data archive is open to academic researchers as well as doctoral students.

### **Selection of publications in world languages**

For sociologists who publish in Hungarian as their native language, publication in a world language is crucial. The *Sociological Review* mentioned above is the only regular forum for that. The occasional publication of any Hungarian text in a world language is a question of luck, money, and personal networks. Under appropriate conditions, either Hungarian or foreign publishers can publish the work of Hungarian scholars in a world language. We provide examples of both cases.

A collection of articles from the Hungarian journal *Századvég* was edited by Zsolt Spéder (1999) and published in Germany. TÁRKI publishes a volume titled *Társadalmi Riport* every second year, the first time in 1990, the last time in 2000. The 1990 and the 1998 volumes have been published by TÁRKI in English as well. The best articles of the 1994 and 1996 volumes were

collected by Andorka et al (1999) and published by CEU Press. Andorka's manual, mentioned above, has been translated into German and published there (Andorka, 2001).

## 6. Views on further development

### National sociologies – relics of history?

Above, we put in brackets the question of what “Hungarian” sociology is, apart from sociology in general. Now in our concluding remarks we would like to turn to this problem. (There is a debate currently going on about this issue: Némedi, 2000; Somlai, 2001; Saád, 2001; Lakatos, 2001.)

Sociology in Hungary is not Hungarian in the sense of being basically or essentially different from what is done elsewhere. It is not and should not be “original”. Growing openness to international events and productions is one of the most important achievements of the past decade. The best people in Hungary study problems that are relevant for the network, and they are active participants in international organizations and networks.

To be concrete: the Hungarian Sociological Association provides a framework for Hungarian sociologists' participation in the international scene; it is a member of the International Sociological Association (ISA) and of the European Sociological Association (ESA). Several Hungarian sociologists are individual members in these institutions. One of our colleagues (György Lengyel) is a member of the board of the ESA. Several Hungarian colleagues participate in the activity of the research committees of the ISA or in the activity of the research networks of the ESA. Three Hungarian institutions (Dept. of Sociology, Univ. of Economics, Inst. of Political Sciences of HAS, TARKI) are members of the European Consortium of Sociological Research (ECSR). International conferences provide Hungarian sociologists good opportunities to interact with the international scientific community. In 1995, the second ESA conference was held in Budapest. The Hungarian Sociological Association organizes conferences every year. In the last ten years, these conferences were mainly national ones, but the 1992, 1994, and 1999 conferences had an international character. The 1999 conference aimed to provide an overview of the 10 years of system transformation.

However, the problem of “national” sociologies is broader than just participation in international networks. Obviously, sociologists are linked to “their” societies: there they find the facts they study and there are the various publics they turn to in the hope of contributing to a better self-understanding of actors. It was in this sense that the sociology of the 1990s was “Hungarian”: it was the sociology *of* Hungary. The system transformation provided the laboratory for research (even if the possibilities may not have been optimally utilized) and the topic of discourse.

New developments in theory and methods and the necessity of comparative research break up this primordial linkage of sociology to its “native” territory. Those who bother less with sociological enlightenment and more with really sophisticated and comparative research that requires access to data and sources outside the body of the nation therefore give preference to topics of interest to a different, international public.

There is another sense in which sociology was and is “Hungarian”. It was and perhaps is sociology *for* Hungary. Many Hungarian sociologists tried to persuade “their” public, even if they were disappointed because this public did not listen to them with the interest they expected. Many sociologists believe that sociology (with other social sciences) should function as a kind of scientific conscience of “their” society. It is an open question whether sociology can in the future provide social self-knowledge and whether sociological enlightenment will be possible in a globalized world.

The most potent factors in the conservation of “national” sociologies are the institutions of education and research. In fact, “Hungarian” sociologists are those who are affiliated with an institution in Hungary. In this sense, “Hungarian” sociology is sociology done *by* Hungarians *in*

Hungary. The confinement of scientific disciplines in the frameworks of national states was an unquestioned postulate of the 19th-century academic system and remained so even in the first half of the 20th century. State socialism with its characteristic tendency to isolation reinforced the national separation of scientific disciplines, among them sociology. However, there are already a number of individuals (and not the unimportant ones) who have dual affiliations. As university education opens up to the “world” (i.e. to the institutions in the center) “national” scientific institutions are going to lose their strength as determining factors. It is not the “brain drain” that is the real problem. The brain drain has always existed and recent forms of scientific communications diminish its importance. The real problem is the growing irrelevance of national institutions.

Sociology in Hungary is “Hungarian” in the sense that it is done mostly (but less and less overwhelmingly) *in* Hungarian. It is hard to say whether it is an asset or a liability. It can result in parochial isolation from the international science market; on the other hand, sociological enlightenment requires the utilization of natural national languages. Obviously, that is not just sociology’s problem.

Something is lost in the unavoidable internationalization (or “globalization”): sociology cannot fulfill the dream of the first Hungarian sociologists and cannot become the “self-knowledge” of society. The gains are considerable: greater openness to international developments, improved research tools, and multiplication of worldwide contacts. But network sociology has its own deficiencies. From a Hungarian perspective, the most important of these is that – at least in these years – it strengthens the center-periphery difference. The small sociologies on the Central Eastern European periphery – among them Hungarian sociology – are almost exclusively oriented toward the “big” Atlantic sociological communities, which leads certain relevant topics to be excluded from research.

Sociologists are often torn between two conflicting demands. Should they respond to the standards set by the international sociological community, or should they contribute to the rational discussion of public issues at home and to the enlightenment of “their” civil society? The role models created more than a hundred years ago, which stressed the local vocation of sociology, are breaking down. The tensions are particularly strong in the “small” national communities on the European periphery. We suppose that these problems will come to the fore in the beginning second century of academic sociology.

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